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Item 10B

GARBAGE GAZETTE

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

Vol. 9, No. 1

January/February, 1990

Task Force Suggests Changes to Recycled Newsprint Law

A Task Force created by the General Assembly to make recommendations on facilitating the manufacture and purchase of recycled newsprint reached consensus and issued a list of seventeen recommendations. The Task Force recommended that the existing law be broadened, strengthened, and implemented more quickly.

The Task Force found that newspaper publishers were not the only users of newsprint and therefore suggested that the same standards applied to newspaper publishers be applied to commercial printers and distributors. Further expansion of the recycled paper procurement standards to other grades of paper for other uses such as directories and catalogs should also be considered.

Although a voluntary effort by publishers was found by the Task Force to be preferable to a mandate, penalties for failure to meet the recycled content goals were also considered to be necessary. The publishers were encouraged to commit to meet the recycled content goals for newsprint. With these commitments, the Task Force agreed to recommend a voluntary test period. If the annual statewide consumption quota for the newspaper industry were met, the sanctions would not become effective. Upon failure to meet the statewide quota in any year, the recycled content goals would become standards required to be met by each publisher and printer. A \$5 per ton penalty could be assessed for each ton a publisher or printer was short of the standard. Penalties would be deposited in the Municipal Solid Waste Recycling Trust Fund.

The existing law defines recycled newsprint as newsprint with at least 40% post-consumer fiber. No credit is given for newsprint with higher recycled content and no credit is allowed for newsprint with lower recycled content. This definition was found to restrict the flexibility of newsprint manufacturers in installing de-inking facilities at existing mills. The Task Force recommended that overall secondary fiber use be the criteria for the recycled content quota. The following revised quotas which begin sooner than the existing law and incorporate higher standards were recommended:

Year	Task Forces' % recycled fiber	Current law (assuming 40% content)
1992	11%	no requirement
1993	16%	8%
1994	20%	12%
1995	23%	16%
1996	31%	24%
1997	40%	32%
1998	45%	36%
1999	50%	36%

The Task Force was comprised of legislators, state agency representatives, recyclers, newspaper publishers, and environmental interests. During the course of its study, the Task Force heard testimony from mills, publishers, commercial printers, waste paper dealers, railroads, and others interested in newspaper recycling and newsprint. A report and recommendations will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration.

Good News for Old News...ONP Market on the Rebound

In recent months, new developments have occurred which will significantly boost demand for old newspapers (ONP) in the eastern United States. Although many municipalities are presently paying to market their ONP, new developments mark a turning point in the ONP market. Newsprint mills will soon be buying ONP from suppliers who generate large quantities of high quality fiber. Most newsprint mills will need #8 news which includes only clean, dry newspapers. ONP collection programs should be designed to recover newspapers as delivered to a household without any other materials. In other words, junk mail and magazines should not be mixed with the newspaper.

Newsprint manufacturers are facing static demand for the oversupply of virgin newsprint, while demand for recycled newsprint is booming. Laws mandating the purchase of recycled newsprint and the newspaper publishers' desire to switch to recycled paper are forcing virgin newsprint manufacturers to consider adding de-inking facilities at their mills. Commitments to add de-inking facilities have been announced for five major mills in the eastern U.S. and Canada. These conversions to recycled fiber will occur over the next two years. Five different companies are proposing to build new mills that will use recycled ONP in the northeast.

This flurry of activity is impacting the ONP market. To proceed with these huge capital investments, manufacturers must have a guaranteed supply of high quality fiber. Consequently, partnerships between newsprint manufacturers and large waste management firms are being announced. Jefferson-Smurfit and Waste Management intend to merge ownership for processing and marketing recycled fiber. Canadian Pacific has contracted with Laidlaw Waste Systems to supply the fiber for recently announced de-inking facilities.

The need to assure adequate tonnages of high quality fiber in the next few years has led to futures contracts. Under these contracts, the buyer agrees to accept, starting at an established future date, a specified tonnage of a specified material for a long period of time at an agreed upon price. These contracts provide a stable market for both the buyer and seller. At the present time, a 20-year contract for baled ONP picked up by the buyer beginning in mid-1991 is being offered. Under these contracts, suppliers will be paid \$25 per ton for their ONP and have a guaranteed stable market. Buyers are looking for suppliers able to guarantee reasonably large tonnages of quality fiber in the future. Preference is given to facilities with rail access.

Recycling Program Kicks Off in Northeastern Connecticut

Recycling bins are being distributed in Northeastern CT for residents of Woodstock, Brooklyn, Scotland and Hampton. In Woodstock, bins are available at the town hall for the 2600 households in the local area. "The bins are a great way to officially begin our recycling effort," says Winston Averill, regional recycling coordinator. The recycling effort will be run without an Intermediate Processing Center (IPC) as the towns are close enough to markets to make the intermediate processing unnecessary. Recyclables are collected in rolloffs and shipped direct to market. Residents have the option of curbside collection by their local hauler or bringing their recyclables to a local drop-off center.

Commercial Recycling Focus of Spring Conference

A commercial recycling conference has been scheduled for March 19, 1990 at the Cromwell Treadway Hotel. The conference is sponsored by the Connecticut Forum of Regulated Environmental Professionals in association with the DEP and the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. Topics to be covered include: What are the Requirements?, How to Comply, and Where to Get Help. Speakers from corporations that already have effective recycling programs will be featured along with state, regional and local officials. Representatives from recycling centers, markets and collection services will also speak. To have conference registration materials sent to you, call either the CT Forum at 735-9544 or the DEP at 566-8722.



Earth Day Celebrates 20th Anniversary

"The Earth Doesn't Stand a Chance Without You" is the theme for Earth Day 20 Connecticut, a celebration of 20 years of increasing environmental awareness. A series of activities including grass roots involvement, hands-on education, a public conference and a musical star fest have been planned for the week of April 22, 1990. For more information on any of these events please call, 203-865-ERTH.

National Recycling Day, April 17, 1990

The national Earth Day 1990 organization, operating out of Stanford University in California, has proclaimed April 17, 1990, as Recycling Day. Earth Week 1990 runs from April 16-21 and is focusing on a different environmental topic each day.

COMING NEXT MONTH - EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES AROUND THE STATE

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Dept. of Environmental Protection
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Hartford, CT 06106
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